STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Senate

File No. 244

General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Substitute Senate Bill No. 291

Senate, March 31, 2022

The Committee on Housing reported through SEN. LOPES of the 6th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROTECTIONS FOR GROUP AND FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- Section 1. Section 8-3j of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):
- 3 (a) No zoning regulation shall treat any family child care home
- 4 [registered] or group child care home located in a residence and licensed
- 5 <u>by the Office of Early Childhood</u> pursuant to [section 17b-733] <u>chapter</u>
- 6 <u>368a</u> in a manner different from single or multifamily dwellings.
- 7 <u>(b) Not later than December 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, each</u>
- 8 <u>municipality shall submit to the Office of Policy and Management a</u>
- 9 sworn statement from the chief executive officer of the municipality
- stating (1) that the municipality's zoning ordinances are in compliance
- 11 with (A) subsection (a) of this section, and (B) the provisions of
- 12 <u>subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of section 8-2, as amended by this act,</u>
- 13 or (2) the specific time frame within which the municipality will bring

14 its zoning ordinances into compliance with subsection (a) of this section 15 and subsection (d) of section 8-2, as amended by this act.

- 16 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 8-2 of the 2022 supplement to the
- 17 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu 18
- thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

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- 19 (d) Zoning regulations adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of this 20 section shall not:
- 21 (1) (A) Prohibit the operation in a residential zone of any family child 22 care home or group child care home [in a residential zone] located in a 23 residence, or (B) require any special zoning permit or special zoning 24 exception for such operation;
 - (2) (A) Prohibit the use of receptacles for the storage of items designated for recycling in accordance with section 22a-241b or require that such receptacles comply with provisions for bulk or lot area, or similar provisions, except provisions for side yards, rear yards and front yards; or (B) unreasonably restrict access to or the size of such receptacles for businesses, given the nature of the business and the volume of items designated for recycling in accordance with section 22a-241b, that such business produces in its normal course of business, provided nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit such regulations from requiring the screening or buffering of such receptacles for aesthetic reasons;
 - (3) Impose conditions and requirements on manufactured homes, including mobile manufactured homes, having as their narrowest dimension twenty-two feet or more and built in accordance with federal manufactured home construction and safety standards or on lots containing such manufactured homes, including mobile manufactured home parks, if those conditions and requirements are substantially different from conditions and requirements imposed on (A) singlefamily dwellings; (B) lots containing single-family dwellings; or (C) multifamily dwellings, lots containing multifamily dwellings, cluster developments or planned unit developments;

(4) (A) Prohibit the continuance of any nonconforming use, building or structure existing at the time of the adoption of such regulations; (B) require a special permit or special exception for any such continuance; (C) provide for the termination of any nonconforming use solely as a result of nonuse for a specified period of time without regard to the intent of the property owner to maintain that use; or (D) terminate or deem abandoned a nonconforming use, building or structure unless the property owner of such use, building or structure voluntarily discontinues such use, building or structure and such discontinuance is accompanied by an intent to not reestablish such use, building or structure. The demolition or deconstruction of a nonconforming use, building or structure shall not by itself be evidence of such property owner's intent to not reestablish such use, building or structure;

- (5) Prohibit the installation, in accordance with the provisions of section 8-1bb, of temporary health care structures for use by mentally or physically impaired persons if such structures comply with the provisions of said section, unless the municipality opts out in accordance with the provisions of subsection (j) of said section;
- (6) Prohibit the operation in a residential zone of any cottage food operation, as defined in section 21a-62b;
- (7) Establish for any dwelling unit a minimum floor area that is greater than the minimum floor area set forth in the applicable building, housing or other code;
- (8) Place a fixed numerical or percentage cap on the number of dwelling units that constitute multifamily housing over four units, middle housing or mixed-use development that may be permitted in the municipality;
 - (9) Require more than one parking space for each studio or onebedroom dwelling unit or more than two parking spaces for each dwelling unit with two or more bedrooms, unless the municipality opts out in accordance with the provisions of section 8-2p; or

(10) Be applied to deny any land use application, including for any site plan approval, special permit, special exception or other zoning approval, on the basis of (A) a district's character, unless such character is expressly articulated in such regulations by clear and explicit physical standards for site work and structures, or (B) the immutable characteristics, source of income or income level of any applicant or end user, other than age or disability whenever age-restricted or disability-restricted housing may be permitted.

- Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 19a-87b of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):
- (a) No person, group of persons, association, organization, corporation, institution or agency, public or private, shall maintain a family child care home, as described in section 19a-77, without a license issued by the Commissioner of Early Childhood. Licensure forms shall be obtained from the Office of Early Childhood. Applications for licensure shall be made to the commissioner on forms provided by the office and shall contain the information required by regulations adopted under this section. The licensure and application forms shall contain a notice that false statements made therein are punishable in accordance with section 53a-157b. Applicants shall state, in writing, that they are in compliance with the regulations adopted by the commissioner pursuant to subsection (f) of this section. Before a family child care home license is granted, the office shall make an inquiry and investigation which shall include a visit and inspection of the premises for which the license is requested. Any inspection conducted by the office shall include an inspection for evident sources of lead poisoning. The office shall provide for a chemical analysis of any paint chips found on such premises. Neither the commissioner nor the commissioner's designee shall require an annual inspection for homes seeking license renewal or for licensed homes, except that the commissioner or the commissioner's designee shall make an unannounced visit, inspection or investigation of each licensed family child care home at least once every year. A licensed family child care home shall not be subject to any conditions on the

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operation of such home by local officials, other than those imposed by

- the office pursuant to this subsection, if the home complies with all
- 113 [local] codes and ordinances applicable to single and multifamily
- 114 dwellings.
- 115 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 47a-4 of the general statutes is
- repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
- 117 1, 2022):
- (a) A rental agreement shall not provide that the tenant: (1) Agrees to
- waive or forfeit rights or remedies under this chapter and sections 47a-
- 120 21, 47a-23 to 47a-23b, inclusive, 47a-26 to 47a-26g, inclusive, 47a-35 to
- 121 47a-35b, inclusive, 47a-41a, 47a-43 and 47a-46, or under any section of
- the general statutes or any municipal ordinance unless such section or
- 123 ordinance expressly states that such rights may be waived; (2)
- authorizes the landlord to confess judgment on a claim arising out of the
- rental agreement; (3) agrees to the exculpation or limitation of any
- liability of the landlord arising under law or to indemnify the landlord
- for that liability or the costs connected therewith; (4) agrees to waive his
- right to the interest on the security deposit pursuant to section 47a-21;
- 129 (5) agrees to permit the landlord to dispossess him without resort to
- court order; (6) consents to the distraint of his property for rent; (7)
- agrees to pay the landlord's attorney's fees in excess of fifteen per cent
- of any judgment against the tenant in any action in which money
- damages are awarded; (8) agrees to pay a late charge prior to the
- expiration of the grace period set forth in section 47a-15a or to pay rent
- in a reduced amount if such rent is paid prior to the expiration of such
- grace period; [or] (9) agrees to pay a heat or utilities surcharge if heat or
- utilities is included in the rental agreement; or (10) in any rental
- 138 agreement entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2022, is
- 139 prohibited from operating a licensed family child care home, as
- 140 <u>described in section 19a-77</u>, or is otherwise restricted in the operation of
- a licensed family child care home.
- Sec. 5. (NEW) (Effective October 1, 2022) In any renter's or
- 143 homeowner's insurance policy providing coverage for the operator of a

licensed family child care home or group child care home, such operator may, and at the landlord's request shall, name such operator's landlord as an additional insured on such policy. For the purposes of this section, "family child care home" and "group child care home" have the same descriptions as provided in section 19a-77 of the general statutes and "landlord" has the same meaning as provided in section 47a-1 of the

- Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2022*) In any civil action arising from an act or omission of an operator of a licensed family child care home or group child care home in the course of operating such child care home in a dwelling unit, the landlord of such dwelling unit shall not be liable for such act or omission of such operator. For the purposes of this section, "family child care home" and "group child care home" have the same descriptions as provided in section 19a-77 of the general statutes and "landlord" and "dwelling unit" have the same meanings as provided in section 47a-1 of the general statutes.
- Sec. 7. Section 19a-80 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1*, 2022):
 - (a) No person, group of persons, association, organization, corporation, institution or agency, public or private, shall maintain a child care center or group child care home without a license issued in accordance with this section and sections 19a-77 to [19a-80] 19a-79a, inclusive, and 19a-82 to 19a-87a, inclusive. Applications for such license shall be made to the Commissioner of Early Childhood on forms provided by the commissioner and shall contain the information required by regulations adopted under said sections. The forms shall contain a notice that false statements made therein are punishable in accordance with section 53a-157b.
 - (b) (1) Upon receipt of an application for a license, the commissioner shall issue such license if, upon inspection and investigation, said commissioner finds that the applicant, the facilities and the program meet the health, educational and social needs of children likely to attend

general statutes.

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the child care center or group child care home and comply with requirements established by regulations adopted under this section and sections 19a-77 to 19a-79a, inclusive, and sections 19a-82 to 19a-87a, inclusive. Any such inspection under this subsection of a group child care home located in a residence shall include an inspection for evident sources of lead poisoning, and shall provide for chemical analysis of any paint chips found on such premises. The commissioner shall offer an expedited application review process for an application submitted by a municipal agency or department. A currently licensed person or entity, as described in subsection (a) of this section, seeking a change of operator, ownership or location shall file a new license application, except such person or entity may request the commissioner to waive the requirement that a new license application be filed. The commissioner may grant or deny such request. Each license shall be for a term of four years, shall be nontransferable, and may be renewed upon receipt by the commissioner of a renewal application and accompanying licensure fee. The commissioner may suspend or revoke such license after notice and an opportunity for a hearing as provided in section 19a-84 for violation of the regulations adopted under this section and sections 19a-77 to 19a-79a, inclusive, and sections 19a-82 to 19a-87a, inclusive. In the case of an application for renewal of a license that has expired, the commissioner may renew such expired license within thirty days of the date of such expiration upon receipt of a renewal application and accompanying licensure fee.

(2) The commissioner shall collect from the licensee of a child care center a fee of five hundred dollars prior to issuing or renewing a license for a term of four years. The commissioner shall collect from the licensee of a group child care home a fee of two hundred fifty dollars prior to issuing or renewing a license for a term of four years. The commissioner shall require only one license for a child care center operated in two or more buildings, provided the same licensee provides child care services in each building and the buildings are joined together by a contiguous playground that is part of the licensed space.

(3) The commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, shall make an

unannounced visit, inspection or investigation of each licensed child care center and group child care home at least once each year. At least once every two years, the local health director, or the local health director's designee, shall make an inspection of each licensed child care center and group child care home.

- (4) A municipality may not subject the operation of a licensed group child care home located in a residence to any conditions, other than those imposed by the commissioner pursuant to this subsection, if the group child care home complies with all codes and ordinances applicable to single and multifamily dwellings.
- 221 (c) The commissioner shall require each prospective employee of a 222 child care center or group child care home for a position that requires 223 the provision of care to a child or involves unsupervised access to any 224 child in such child care center or group child care home, to submit to 225 comprehensive background checks, including state and national 226 criminal history records checks. The criminal history records checks 227 required pursuant to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance 228 with section 29-17a. The commissioner shall also request a check of the 229 state child abuse registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k. The 230 Commissioner of Early Childhood shall notify each licensee of the 231 provisions of this subsection. No such prospective employee shall begin 232 working in such child care center or group child care home until the 233 provisions of 45 CFR 98.43(d)(4), as amended from time to time, have 234 been satisfied.
 - (d) The commissioner shall inform each licensee, by way of a plain language summary provided not later than sixty days after the regulation's effective date, of new or changed regulations adopted under this section and sections 19a-77 to [19a-80] 19a-79a, inclusive, or sections 19a-82 to 19a-87a, inclusive, with which a licensee must comply.
 - Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2022*) (a) Any provision in a written instrument relating to real property that prohibits the leasing of the real property for use or occupancy as a licensed family child care home is void.

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(b) Any provision in a written instrument relating to real property that purports to prohibit the leasing of the real property, in a single-family dwelling, for use or occupancy as a licensed group child care home is void. Any restriction in such written instrument as to the use or occupancy of the property as a licensed group child care home is void.

- (c) An attempt to deny, restrict or encumber the leasing of real property for use or occupancy as a licensed family child care home is void. A property owner or manager shall not refuse to rent, or refuse to negotiate for the rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a single or multifamily dwelling in which the underlying zoning allows for residential use to a person because that person operates or intends to operate a licensed family child care home.
- (d) No person shall attempt to deny, restrict or encumber the leasing of real property, in a single-family dwelling, for use or occupancy as a licensed group child care home. A property owner or manager shall not refuse to rent, or refuse to negotiate the rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a single-family dwelling in which the underlying zoning allows for residential use to a person because such person operates or intends to operate a licensed group child care home.
- (e) A restriction, whether by way of covenant, contract or condition upon use or occupancy, that restricts directly or indirectly limits the use, or occupancy of a single-family dwelling in which the underlying zoning allows for residential use as a licensed family child care home or group child care home is void.
- (f) A restriction, whether by way of covenant, contract or condition upon use or occupancy, that restricts directly or indirectly limits the use, or occupancy of a multifamily dwelling in which the underlying zoning allows for use as a licensed family child care home is void.
- (g) This section shall not apply to any such restriction imposed by an association of unit owners for a condominium or unit owners' association if a common interest community imposes such a restriction upon a dwelling.

(h) For the purposes of this section, "restriction" means a restriction imposed orally, in writing or by conduct and includes prohibition and "family child care home" and "group child care home" have the same descriptions as provided in section 19a-77 of the general statutes.

- Sec. 9. Subsection (b) of section 47a-21 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1*, 2022):
- (b) (1) [In] Except as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection, in the case of a tenant under sixty-two years of age, a landlord shall not demand a security deposit in an amount that exceeds two months' rent.
- (2) [In] Except as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection, in the case of a tenant sixty-two years of age or older, a landlord shall not demand a security deposit in an amount that exceeds one month's rent. Any landlord who has received a security deposit in an amount that exceeds one month's rent from a tenant who becomes sixty-two years of age after paying such security deposit shall return the portion of such security deposit that exceeds one month's rent to the tenant upon the tenant's request.
- (3) A landlord may demand an additional security deposit of a reasonable amount from a tenant who operates a group child care home, as described in section 19a-77.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following		
sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2022	8-3j
Sec. 2	October 1, 2022	8-2(d)
Sec. 3	October 1, 2022	19a-87b(a)
Sec. 4	October 1, 2022	47a-4(a)
Sec. 5	October 1, 2022	New section
Sec. 6	October 1, 2022	New section
Sec. 7	October 1, 2022	19a-80
Sec. 8	October 1, 2022	New section
Sec. 9	October 1, 2022	47a-21(b)

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 8(h), reference to the descriptions of "family child care home" and "group child care home" was added for clarity and consistency with the rest of the bill.

HSG Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill prohibits municipalities from placing special zoning or operational restrictions on group child care homes and does not result in a fiscal impact.

The bill also extends the requirement that the Office of Early Childhood inspects for evident sources of lead poisoning during licensing inspections of group child care homes that are located in residences, which is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis sSB 291

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROTECTIONS FOR GROUP AND FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes in laws about licensed family and group child care homes located in residences (see BACKGROUND).

The bill limits a landlord's ability to refuse to allow family and group child care homes in rental properties and voids certain restrictions on the properties' use for this purpose. (It is unclear if the bill retroactively voids existing restrictions or only voids those established after the bill's effective date).

Conversely, the bill provides certain protections for the landlords of family and group child care home operators, including (1) limiting landlords' civil liability for an operator's act or omission; (2) requiring operators to add them as an additional insured on applicable insurance policies if the landlord requests it; and (3) allowing landlords to charge group child care home operators an additional, reasonable security deposit.

The bill prohibits municipal zoning regulations from treating licensed group child care homes located in a residence differently than single or multifamily properties, a prohibition that already applies to the treatment of family child care homes in existing law. The bill also prohibits zoning regulations from requiring a special permit or exception to operate either a family or group child care home within a residential zone. Under the bill, each municipality must annually report to the Office of Policy Management (OPM) that its zoning regulations are compliant with these requirements or give the timeframe of when they will be.

Existing law requires the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to inspect family child care homes for evident sources of lead poisoning during licensing inspections and send for testing any paint chips it finds.) It also prohibits municipalities from imposing operational conditions (other than those OEC requires) on family child care homes that comply with all codes and ordinances. The bill extends this requirement and prohibition to group child care homes located in a residence.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022

§§ 4 & 8 — PROHIBITED ACTIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

Prohibited Actions

The bill prohibits landlords and property managers from refusing to rent to a current or prospective tenant a (1) multifamily dwelling, zoned for residential use, because he or she operates or plans to operate a licensed family child care home in it or (2) single-family dwelling, zoned for residential use, because he or she operates or plans to operate either a licensed family or group child care home in it. The bill similarly prohibits landlords and property managers from refusing to negotiate the rental of, or otherwise making unavailable or denying, these properties to prospective tenants for the same reasons.

The bill also prohibits individuals from attempting to deny, restrict, or encumber single-family residences from being rented for use or occupancy as a licensed group child care home.

Voided Restrictions

Under the bill, a "restriction" refers to those that are imposed orally, in writing, or by conduct, and includes prohibitions. The bill voids the following restrictions on property:

1. any provision of a written real estate instrument that prohibits a property from being leased for use or occupancy as a licensed family child care home, or claims to do so with respect to a single-family residence's use or occupancy as a licensed group child

care home;

2. attempts to deny, restrict, or encumber a property from being leased for use or occupancy as a licensed family child care home;

- 3. restrictions in covenants, contracts, or occupancy conditions that directly or indirectly limit the use or occupancy of a single-family dwelling in which the zoning regulations allow for residential use as a child care home; and
- 4. restrictions in covenants, contracts, or occupancy conditions that directly or indirectly limit the use or occupancy of a multifamily dwelling in which the zoning regulations allow for use as a licensed family child care home.

Exceptions

The bill excludes from its prohibited restrictions those that are imposed by (1) an association of unit owners for a condominium or (2) unit owners' association for a dwelling in common interest community.

Rental Agreements

Under the bill, rental agreements entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2022, may not prohibit or restrict a tenant's operating a licensed family child care home.

§§ 5, 6 & 9 — LANDLORD PROTECTIONS

The bill provides certain protections to landlords who rent to family and group child care home operators; specifically, it does the following:

- 1. explicitly authorizes operators to add their landlord as an additional insured on their renter's or homeowner's insurance policies that provide coverage for the child care homes, and requires they do so at their landlord's request;
- 2. protects landlords from civil liability arising from a tenant's act or omission operating a family or group child care home in a rental unit; and

3. allows landlords to demand an additional security deposit (see BACKGROUND) of a reasonable amount from tenants operating group child care homes (however, the bill does not define "reasonable").

§ 1 — MUNICIPAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Annually, beginning by December 1, 2022, the bill requires each municipality's chief executive officer to submit to OPM a sworn compliance statement for the laws restricting the municipal zoning regulation of family and group child care homes, as amended by the bill. The statement must either:

- 1. declare that the municipality's zoning regulations (a) treat family and group child care homes located in a residence the same as single and multifamily dwellings and (b) do not prohibit their operation in a residential zone or require any special zoning permit or special exception for their operation or
- 2. give the specific time frame within which the municipality will bring its zoning regulations into compliance with these requirements.

§§ 1 & 2 — LIMITS ON MUNICIPAL ZONING REGULATION

Under current law, zoning regulations cannot prohibit family or group child care homes from operating in residential zones. The bill specifies that this restriction applies only to those located in a residence. Additionally, under the bill, zoning regulations cannot require special permits or exceptions for the operation of these family and group child care homes. (Special permits and exceptions are synonymous; they allow recipients to use a property in a way explicitly permitted by the zoning regulations, subject to conditions not applicable to other uses in the same district.)

Under current law, municipal zoning regulations may not treat family child care homes differently than single or multifamily properties. The bill extends this limitation to group child care homes located in a residence.

BACKGROUND

Family and Group Child Care Homes

A family child care home is a private family home generally caring for up to six children, including the provider's own children not in school full-time, where the children are cared for between three and 12 hours per day on a regular basis (CGS § 19a-77(a)(3)).

A group child care home (1) offers or provides supplementary care to between seven and 12 children on a regular basis or (2) meets the definition of a family child care home except that it operates in a facility other than a private family home (CGS § 19a-77(a)(2)).

Security Deposits

By law, landlords cannot demand a security deposit that exceeds (1) two months' rent for tenants under age 62 or (2) one month's rent for tenants age 62 or older.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Housing Committee

Joint Favorable Yea 12 Nay 3 (03/15/2022)